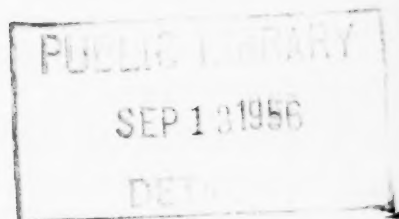


CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion



The Crisis in the Suez Canal

The Suez crisis is not yet settled as these lines are written. However, interesting developments give a new turn to the international situation.

A most significant development was that our nation, traditionally suspected by both foes and allies for lacking in caution, played a moderating role. Britain, traditionally so cautious, seemed to have lost its poise in the initial stages and made war-like gestures. The French were even more hysterical. This emotion was natural enough but also disproportionate, for what Nasser had done was, in a sense, the inevitable consequence of the withdrawal of British troops from Suez. Meanwhile the conference was convened by the Big Three and Secretary Dulles' plan was unfolded, providing for the control of the canal by an international body, for compensation to the former owners and for greater profits to Egypt. Nasser will keep the issue alive for some time. It is quite apparent, however, that the Suez crisis will not lead to war and that Nasser will not seriously challenge the international stakes in the waterway.

These bare facts do not reveal the full import of the crisis. The challenge by Nasser is significant because it raises the issue of "colonialism" in the most embarrassing way. Egypt is certainly not a colony though the canal is controlled by the technically competent nations, and Egypt's comparative impotence in the control of this great waterway through its territory is a vivid reminder of the impingement of technically powerful nations upon the non-technical ones which has created so much resentment, even when the power was used as creatively as as possible. Nasser's charge that the Suez situation represents "collective colonialism" and the obvious sympathy for his position in the Asian world, will serve to remind the West that

the world struggle does not appear, and has never appeared, in Asian and African eyes as a simple conflict between virtue and vice. The issue of colonialism and imperialism has obscured the simpler outlines which we tried to preserve.

The position of Russia in the Suez crisis is significant in revealing the subtlety of the new Russian policy. He arms deal with Egypt first started Nasser on his path of international trouble-making. But Russia is very reserved in its support and betrays an obvious concern for the avoidance of war. This subtlety is a natural extension of the whole post-Stalin Russian diplomacy.

We are witnessing the rapid shift of world tensions in which the old slogans will not be very relevant. Communism is still a despotism and a dangerous form of totalitarianism. But it offers itself now, not as a revolutionary creed to the "masses," but as a powerful national friend to resentful "colonial" nations. These nations do not have to change their form of government. They are merely encouraged to add technical efficiency to the older collectivism and thus to enter into the temple of modernity, without the benefits of a free society. The virtues of a pure democratic way of life, particularly its fruits of social justice, are obscured by the indictment that we have been unjust to the weaker nations.

It will be difficult to counter this kind of diplomacy. Neither "containment" nor "liberation" are the proper slogans for this situation in which the whole melodramatic character of the old "cold war" has changed into an infinitely complex conflict with a resourceful foe, who is intent upon isolating us in the colored continents and upon offering the people of the world the chance to exchange their old organic collectivism for the

more efficient and more terrible technical collectivism. It is not only our national interest which is imperiled by these developments but Western democracy itself. R.N.

THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

IT WOULD be an austere soul who would write only of the ethical aspects of the Republican National Convention. Such an affair has its ethics, but also its mechanics, its aesthetics, and its theological overtones.

The theology was notably deficient in the dialectical tension. Governor Dan Thornton made it plain that the simple gospel of his party is "Truth, Truth, Truth!" Senator Knowland, after pinning three wars on the Democrats, cited Saint Paul against the Communists: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Cor. 5:14). In general there was exhibited an energy of self-adulation which even the opposition might envy. Also, when Halleck was nominating Ike, he addressed the President directly in the second person over the medium of TV in tones of reverence and of prayerful supplication. The seconding speeches were like the witnesses at a revival who bore testimony to "what Ike has done for me." When shortly thereafter the convention broke out spontaneously into synthetic pandemonium, it was as though to herald the second coming on clouds of glory of the Son of Man.

In the realm of mechanics we may put the party platform and the nomination of the Vice-President. Both jobs were hand-tooled with precision with a view to eliminating surface points of irritation. The civil rights plank was certainly stronger than that of the Democrats, but not so strong as it should have been and could have been. It was soon apparent, however, that there were only three important planks in the platform: Peace, Prosperity, Progress.

Perhaps it was appropriate that at this convention, in connection with the nomination of Nixon, there should take place the cracking of the last of the Republican egg-heads. If Harold Stassen had a good idea in the first place, all that he lacked in order to put it over was the tact, the timing, and the personality. When at last he humbled himself to second the nomination of Nixon, he wearied the delegates with too much talking until his vanity came peeping through

the rags of his repentance. It still remains a mystery whether the thought behind that furrowed double-dome was a thought for the good of the party, or for the good of the nation, or just for the good of Harold Stassen.

Under the heading of aesthetics we may place Ethel Merman's belting out of the convention theme song, and other splendid exhibitions of Womanpower for Eisenhower. But the important item here was the poetic creation of compelling political metaphor. Len Hall presented Ike as The Smile—"the man who brought back the smile to the face of America." Tom Dewey, in an otherwise rational discourse, at one point held up Ike as the Holy Comforter: "Every American can sleep better at night because the President. . ." But it was California's Goodwin Knight who proffered the sort of bold hyperbole which makes proud the pulse of any true Westerner. For him Ike was the Light of the World. After reference to the "hollow-cast" of war, Knight cited the British statesman who in 1914 said that the lights were going out all over Europe. But, said he, "the lights were lighted again when President Eisenhower made his appearance on the stage of history." By my reckoning, before the advent of *Lux Mundi*, the "lights out" period would include the regimes of three Republican presidents.

It must be said, however, that the acceptance addresses of the two candidates were on a high level. They lacked the complacency and self-gratulation which ran through the rest of the proceedings, and turned instead to the challenge of the future. Nixon spoke well, and was the only one of the four principal national candidates, Democratic or Republican, to make himself explicit on the rights of the Negro. As for Ike, I could not help feeling that, with his plain practical prose he has an ability to reach in direct discourse the heart of America that is not always matched by the talented phrase-maker who is his opponent. In any case it struck me that Ike and Dick stood in advance of the aspirations of the rest of the party, as did Adlai and Estes.

I came away from the convention with the conviction that, while another heart attack might do it, or a recurrence of ileitis, it is improbable that the American people will cast off The Comforter, extinguish The Light, depose The Smile.

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THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

THE unexpectedly dramatic Democratic National Convention of 1956 demonstrated once again what a strange combination of the predictable and the spontaneous, of personal, ideational, and sociological forces, constitutes the process of politics.

Until Harry Truman's bold move to stop him, the nomination seemed assured to Stevenson. What motivated Truman's action? Even those most closely involved probably cannot judge precisely to what extent personal pique, a genuine difference in political philosophy, a struggle for control of the party machinery. Pathos attended the figure of the former President, a pathos rather deepened than removed by his later gestures of conciliation. Politically, the net result was to free Stevenson from identification with the Truman era, and from alliance with any special interest within the party.

Likewise the upholding of the Platform Committee on the sensitive issue of civil rights prevented the Democratic Party from being cast in the image of either its far left or its far right wings. The Northern liberals displayed little respect for politics as the art of the possible—unless they were speaking primarily to their own constituents. The Southerners probably took comfort in the relative harmlessness of statements destined mainly for the party archives.

Stevenson's call for an "open" decision on the Vice-Presidential nomination was an act at once of statesmanship and of political shrewdness. Calculated to contrast with the Republicans' expected performance, it relieved Stevenson himself of a most difficult decision. Senator Kefauver's victory apparently owed much to his tireless campaigning, especially in the farm states. The almost unanimous opposition to him by the Southern delegations, and their willingness to support instead a Roman Catholic Senator from Massachusetts, evidenced how the racial issue now outweighs all other considerations in the South.

Thus the 1956 convention seems to portend another era of "coalition politics" in the Democratic camp, similar to that experienced under Franklin D. Roosevelt. But both the social basis and the ideological articulation will be different from that of 1932. Even as they struggle to retain or to regain the votes of farmers, laborers, and urban Negroes, the Democrats acknowledge that now the decisive battleground may be the suburbs. Correspondingly, even as they reiterate many of

the traditional goals of liberalism, the Democrats under Stevenson are moving toward a new and as yet unlabelled position in political philosophy.

For if we are to judge by his vigorous acceptance speech (as well as by his whole past record), the tag of "moderation" can hardly be considered just to Stevenson. His special genius would seem to lie, not in moderation of approach to agreed objectives, but rather in the apprehension of *new* issues and objectives uniquely pertinent to the present hour. Thus on the racial question, his position involves the recognition that not only the demand for equal justice, but also the responsibility for maintenance of community—both between the races and between the states—presents a political and ethical claim. His assertion that in an age of abundance the issue is that of "the quality of living" hints at the problem of the character of personal existence in a mass society. Likewise in the realm of foreign policy, Stevenson shows an impressive grasp of the meaning of the present crisis and the configuration of ideas and powers involved in it.

Yet we must note, ironically, that the very subtlety and realism of Stevenson's analysis may prove his political undoing. For how can a nation basking in the reflected glory of perhaps the most popular President of all time, and having little understanding of the real dynamics of government, comprehend the Democratic charge of a "failure of leadership"? How much sense will Stevenson's indictment of the use of the arts of advertising for political manipulation make to those sitting before their TV screens? And in a day when even the State Department finds itself cut off from frank and accurate reporting on the world situation, how many Americans will believe his blunt assertion that we are not winning but losing the cold war?

Stevenson himself took cognizance in his acceptance speech of the strangely a-political mood of America. His chances depend upon success in breaking through this armor of national self-satisfaction. Contingencies such as the level of farm income, as well as the state of the Suez Canal, will play a role. Democratic fortunes, however, depend most of all on that most personal of factors, equally un-ideational and un-sociological—the state of Mr. Eisenhower's heart and ileum.

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The "Fanaticism" of Christianity

ROGER L. SHINN

Editor Shinn's article grows, in part, out of several requests from our readers for an article dealing particularly with certain criticisms of the Christian faith made by the eminent historian, Arnold Toynbee. We feel it appropriate that this article should appear at this time when Dr. Toynbee's latest book, An Historian's Approach to Religion, has just been published by the Oxford University Press.

A FLURRY of recent criticisms of Christianity raises again an old, old issue. The criticisms come from distinguished men motivated by a world-wide outlook—from historians, philosophers, and students of culture. They tell us that Christianity is the religion of one great tradition, not of all mankind.

This "scandal of particularity," to which these critics point, has been an issue ever since St. Paul confronted the Greek philosophers. Does a universal God speak to one people as he does not to others? Dare Western Christians bid the wise and ancient East learn of God from us?

Some of the present critics are secular humanists asking us to be rational and scientific. Thus Herbert J. Muller in *The Uses of History* sees an "arrogant assumption" in claims for "an exclusive divine revelation . . . granted to an obscure group at a particular moment in history."

Others are sensitive, religious men. Karl Jaspers in *The Origin and Goal of History*, though he profoundly appreciates Christianity, points out that "the Christian faith is only one faith, not the faith of mankind." Hence, he concludes, we must look for some other "axis of world history" than Christ.

Arnold Toynbee, in joining these critics, has provoked special interest because many people have acclaimed him as a great scholarly spokesman for Christianity. But in the concluding volumes of *A Study of History* and in a lecture at Union Theological Seminary last November, he has censured Christian "arrogance" and "fanaticism." Toynbee's fame has brought this issue into newspapers and popular magazines that are usually innocent of such doctrinal concerns.

The problem lies in the very nature of history. For history is the story of concrete events and their meaning in the life of a people. The experiences of a people reflect the peculiarity of its own geography, economics, institutions. Can, then, the experience of one people become normative for others?

Is History an Ungrateful Son?

The story of the son who grows up to attack his father is celebrated in history, legend, and psychoanalysis. Sometimes the scholarly discipline of history appears to be such a son of Christianity.

Obviously Christianity is not the sole parent of historical study. The maternal parent is the scientific interest which ferrets out evidence. Since Herodotus and Thucydides, and especially since the rise of modern historical sciences, historians have tried to reconstruct an honest and thorough record, however their research may embarrass politicians or priests or ordinary folks who enjoy their prejudices.

But scientific research alone did not create modern history. Any number of secular scholars, who have no aim to vindicate Christianity, have acknowledged a Jewish-Christian heritage in our conception of history. For example, the late Morris R. Cohen, a philosopher famed for brilliance and hard-headedness, wrote: "The modern conception of history has its roots in the Biblical story of Jahveh and of the world which He creates as the scene for the unfolding of a divine plan." Here is the basis for understanding the story of events which shape the character of men and peoples, of dramatic encounters between dynamic forces, of a process shaped by purposes. Here is the source of our awareness that we cannot understand ourselves except as we know how we came to be and what we intend.

Hellenistic and Latin influences long submerged this dynamically historical sense. Thoughtful men sought to discover essences or substances of things, not their history. Theologians paid less attention than the Bible to the acts of God and more to his Being and attributes. Such master scientists as Copernicus and Kepler looked for the mysterious natures of things rather than asking how they arrived where they now temporarily are.

Recent thinkers, however, are fascinated by development and change. Unlike men of old who

called Rome or the later Holy Roman Empire *eternal*, they trace the growth of nations and ask where they are going. Geology investigates the history of the earth; astronomy, the history of the solar system; biology and paleontology, the origin and history of species.

Secular sciences have furnished concrete evidence to support this movement. Often, too, the secular mood has contributed abstract ideas of development and progress which, though unverified, have been persuasive dogmas for many.

But however secular the movement, Protestant Christians have seen in it some awakening of an authentic historical spirit. Enthusiastically or reluctantly, they have turned the techniques of historical science upon religion. If history, the wayward son of Christianity, sometimes assaulted and destroyed sacred beliefs, this son also made the Bible and the history of doctrine more understandable.

Almost any sampling of recent theological writings illustrates the point. Biblical scholars do not search the Scriptures for abstract truth. (Nor do they necessarily ask how each passage fits into the "growth" or "progressive revelation" of God.) Rather, they find in biblical history the continuous dialogue between the living God and his people. They see the "drama of redemption." Then they ask how God addresses *us* through this record.

Similarly the church studies its own history and doctrine. It is quite unembarrassed to look for the political and economic, as well as the theological, sources of Christendom or the Reformation. It confesses "justification by faith," not as abstract doctrine but as living testimony from the struggles of St. Paul and Luther. It looks at its own great credal declarations, seeing how they were wrought in momentous conflict, how they occasionally bear scars of old battles and limitations of the Greek or Roman philosophies which provided their language. It seeks to preserve their testimonies while abandoning some of their peculiarities (e.g., their anathemas), knowing that the Christian expressions of our time will likewise be examined by future ages. For no generation and no language can encompass the riches of the living God.

All this is taken for granted in most of the ecumenical conversations of our time. But what do we do when history looks at the whole of Christianity and "puts it in its place" among the religions of the world? Are the criticisms of Muller, Jaspers, Toynbee, and a hundred others the logical extension of the self-criticism that the church has been making? Or can the church continue to pro-

claim the singular activity of God in Jesus the Christ?

The History of a Historian

Historians, like their subject-matters, have histories. Arnold Toynbee's personal history shows long and thoughtful preoccupation with the present theme. From early youth Toynbee has been fascinated by geography and time tables. With keen imagination he has relived the history of the many places he has visited. In Greece and the Balkans he saw western Europe as he had not seen it in England. In the Muslim world he saw all European history as he could not from within Europe. Out of such experiences comes his passionate protest against parochialism and his inexhaustible desire for distant perspectives and far-flung horizons.

Toynbee's religious pilgrimage is more complex. He has long read deeply the Bible and the Greek tragedians. But in Volumes I-III of *A Study of History*¹ (1934, revised 1935) God appears primarily as a creativity which spawns societies in reckless fertility. These societies live or perish as they respond to challenges. The great virtues are vitality, creative leadership, refusal to petrify. God offers the assurance that however many societies fail, there will be plenty more to make the effort.

By 1939 preoccupation with the decline of civilizations (Vols. IV-VI) appears to bring Toynbee closer to classical Christian faith in redemption. He studies various promises of salvation and punctures their pretensions. Disposing of all merely human promises, he turns to deities. In his "survey of saviours" he examines the recurring motif on the dying God—"this god of many epiphanies but only one Passion." Even here most claimants prove inadequate, until Toynbee comes to quote: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. . . ." Then Toynbee adds: "And now, as we stand and gaze with our eyes fixed upon the farther shore, a single figure rises from the flood and straightway fills the whole horizon. There is the Saviour. . . ." (VI, 276, 278.)

That passage and others like it have been taken as Christian testimonies. Toynbee confirms this impression in his Burge Lecture of 1940 which suggests that Christianity, perhaps enriched by

¹ Future references to *A Study of History* will be identified only by volume and page numbers. The numerous unidentified references all come from the Union Seminary lecture, printed in part in *The Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, January, 1956

Oriental religions, may become "the spiritual heir of all the other higher religions."

We should note, too, some comments at this time about Israel's "jealous God." Yahweh's "exclusiveness" has an "indispensable" value "for the historic role which the God of Israel has played in the revelation of the Divine Nature to Mankind" (VI, 45). And while he makes a high plea for religious tolerance on the deepest religious grounds (IV, 222-29), Toynbee finds religious syncretism a mark of the disintegration of civilization (V, 527 ff.), symbolized by Roman Emperor Alexander Severus who made room in his chapel for statues of various deities including Christ (V, 549).

More recently, however, Toynbee has come closer to the position of Alexander Severus—without quite approving him (VII, 106). As he studies relations between civilizations, themes occasionally suggested before now leap into prominence. My citations probably heighten the contrast, but I will guess that in his planned *Reconsiderations* Toynbee will want to qualify some of his earlier statements about Christianity.

Toynbee: Christianity is Not Christian

Toynbee's current criticisms point out that Christian people and institutions often defy the gospel in sinful pride. Most sensitive Christians will agree that such criticisms are both orthodox and needful. Several of Toynbee's points parallel frequent themes in Christian writing.

1. We "should try to purge our Christianity of its Western accessories."
2. "We can have conviction without fanaticism, we can have belief and action without arrogance and self-centeredness and pride."
3. "To suppress a rival religion and a rival cult is not an answer."
4. "In claiming to possess a monopoly of the Divine Light, a church seems to me to be guilty of *hybris*" (VII, 428).
5. The "annihilation of distance" by technology makes it more important than ever for human beings to appreciate each other.

All these ideals are valuable. The first four, I propose, are authentic Christianity at any time; the fifth reinforces them urgently just now. When Christians deny these standards, they are less than Christian.

Many of our missionaries represent wonderfully these positions. Granted that no one succeeds perfectly in so difficult a task, they are often marvelously sympathetic interpreters of other cultures

to us. They work creatively to express the gospel, in the linguistic and artistic idiom of indigenous cultures. They strive to work themselves out of their jobs by discovering local Christian leaders.

It is sound Christian doctrine that among non-Christian nations "God did not leave himself without witness" (Acts 14:17). St. Augustine is one of many orthodox Christians who have insisted that we dare not limit the power of God to disclose himself and offer salvation to men outside the bounds of Christian institutions. The very Protestant theologians who most emphatically proclaim the uniqueness of the Christian gospel will also most urgently acknowledge sin within the church and saintly qualities in non-Christians.

Nevertheless, it is important that Toynbee tells us what we continuously need to be told. The proof is that some of his recent critics fall headlong into his trap by announcing that anybody can see that we Americans have the right Christian-democratic-economic order and that the poor French and Africans and Egyptians and Indians could get along famously if they would just do things our way—so, of course, Christianity and the American way are right.

Toynbee: Christianity is Too Christian

But another side of Toynbee's case says, not that Christians are unchristian, but that Christians are too Christian. The call "to purge our Christianity of the traditional Christian belief that Christianity is unique" is no longer simply a challenge to be true to the gospel.

Here we start with the question of fact: Is Christianity unique? Or, for that matter, is Islam unique? Is Hinduism? Is Buddhism?

To these questions Toynbee says *no*, provided we get to the "essence" of these religions. But his evidence is slim. "Christianity," he acknowledges, "is a vision of God as so loving His creatures that He has sacrificed Himself for their salvation." So, we must ask, what other religions agree? Toynbee proposes Mahayana Buddhism—but acknowledges that the sacrifice is not made by a real god. Just this is an important point. We may be glad—not jealously disappointed—that here is a doctrine of grace, a kind of justification by faith, a genuine compassion. But the "vision" of the One Creator God giving himself to save his children is not here.

Next, the word "vision" needs examination. For the Christian faith is not content to be a vision. For better or worse it testifies that *God has acted in human history* to redeem men. The preface to

the *Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible* says: "In this respect the Bible is unique among the world's scriptures; it is the only one for whose comprehension the study of historical geography is basic." As a historian Toynbee is remarkably uninterested in the historical quality of Christianity. Yet a skeptic like Santayana had no difficulty in seeing the uniqueness in the Christianity that he enjoyed without quite believing.

But the real problem is not so much the *uniqueness* of Christianity as its testimony to *unique truth*. This testimony is usually quite unconvincing to the outsider. No quoting of Bible or doctrine can establish the rightness of this faith. The Protestant, who sees the fallacy in Roman Catholic attempts to establish the infallibility of a church by quoting the same church, had better acknowledge that most claims for the finality of Christianity are equally circular. If Toynbee helps us realize this, so much the better.

All this, however, comes far from ending the problem. The important fact remains that every man does meet the world with some faith-stance. Everyone makes distinctions between truth and falsity which require him to label some beliefs wrong—even if he must so appear arrogant.

Toynbee is no exception. Like all of us he must choose among monotheism, polytheism, atheism, and pantheism; his choice of monotheism (with a deep bow to mystical pantheism) makes him a partisan. In singling out four higher religions he is bound to appear condescending to men of still other faiths—as some have been saying with good logic. In asserting that "higher religions and leviathan cannot co-exist permanently" he denies that faiths in leviathan "come from God." In affirming doctrines of original sin, the love of God, and "the true end of man, to glorify God and to enjoy him forever," he affronts the faith of some decent people.

In short, Toynbee's faith-stance involves all the "arrogance," "exclusiveness," and "fanaticism" that he ascribes to Christianity. (Just to be clear, I do *not* accuse the humble and devout Mr. Toynbee of these traits. I only say that words which he uses of Christian doctrine can as logically be used of his own doctrine.) In fact, the "broadest" of faiths—whether Christian or Buddhist or humanist—always appear exclusive to their critics.

Our final question now becomes this: Why do we affirm Christian truth? The answer must be: Because of something it has done to us. Rational criteria help us decide religious truth, but never

replace the trust and commitment that enter into all faith. Amid all the cloudiness of our existence, we have found God speaking to us and meeting us in Christ Jesus—who, let us remember, was no Westerner. We believe this is not wishful thinking, for this encounter with God forces us to face ourselves as we desperately try to escape doing, to confess our sin, to see others as in pride we would rather not. But then we find in Christ a new life, a life that often enough we do not want, but a life that, when we taste it, convinces us that the Lord is good.

This faith has its exclusive side. It drives us to renounce alluring idols. But this faith enables us to see witnesses to God in many places. It makes us sensitive to God's work in men of other religions, including the secular humanism that may do God's will without acknowledging him. It helps us see both the rod of God's anger and the call of his justice in anti-Christian revolutionary movements.

In making all these judgments, as all men must make judgments, we take a stand—as all men must take a stand. Our stand, save as it is corrupted by sin, is determined by the revelation of God in Christ. That specific revelation helps us to appreciate the Hindu saint and reject Hindu caste dogmas, to love the church and repent of its infidelities. We are not sure *exactly* what God has done in other religions, but we must start with that "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life" (I John 1:1).

In this faith is the compulsion to proclaim the gospel to the ends of the earth. So we invite men of other faiths to hear this testimony and we accept their invitations to listen. We can only invite, not compel. For we confess, not that we have captured God but that he has found us. We do not claim God in Christ; we acknowledge that God in Christ has claimed us and moved us to announce his act to mankind.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

NATHAN SCOTT writes of modern literature and obstacles confronting the Christian writer. "What we have, I think, to take into account is that in order for the Christian writer (or, indeed, for that matter, any other Christian worker in the field of culture) to assert his identity in the modern world, it has been necessary for him to do so *against* his environment and his culture, for their Christianity has been, on the whole, at a discount."

WORLD CHURCH: News and Notes

God and the Nations

We reprint the following editorial from The Guardian, a Christian journal of public affairs, of Madras, India (July 12, 1956) as an indication of responsible sentiment there regarding this problem.

Condemnations of neutrality in international affairs spring from the fallacy of dividing the world into black and white between which there can be no one who will not join either bloc through military pacts, for that is the proof of being on the side of the black or the white.

The Communist "world" is the world of black "nations," which have no freedom, are atheistic, believe in force and whose people are exploited. The other half of the world is the "free" world — the white side. Those who are neutral, according to critics of neutrality, refuse to regard the world as black and white and insist on treating both alike. The confusion here is that equal treatment at the diplomatic level is interpreted as attaching equal value to the ideologies of the two sides. Besides, the so-called free world does not consist of followers of one free system or even ideology. There are democratic republics and monarchies, absolute monarchies, colonial powers and fascist dictatorships making up the motley crowd.

Another fallacy in the criticism is the identification of governments with people and giving them common attributes. It is here that belief in God is dragged in, in an attitude of self-righteousness . . . Communist governments do not believe in God but uphold atheism, but there is no *nation* in the world which can be branded atheist. Devoutly religious people continue to hold fast to their faith even under Communist governments. If they do not rise up and denounce their governments they are helpless or even indifferent out of despair, just as religious people are even in the free world, in the face of racist or fascist policies of their governments, not all members of which might believe in a God.

It is true that governments might uphold certain

moral values through their constitutions and in ordering life in the territories under their charge. It is from this point of view that Communist governments come under justifiable criticism. But no really democratic government identifies itself with a particular religion or set of religious beliefs. Looking for belief in God in the policies of governments is futile and the division of the world into nations who believe in God and those who do not is unjust. Judgments based on such a classification and the implication that neutrals in international politics are therefore devoid of morality can only encourage disbelief in God and in the goodness and tolerance of believers.

Communists are a misguided group. Some people of Communist countries have been driven to Communism by the failure of the godly; some are helpless victims of Communists and others tolerate Communist governments in order to take the line of least resistance. A Communist country is made up of these and other kinds of people. They are not to be despised, condemned and destroyed, though unfortunately some who believe in God think that that is their mission in life. God cannot be claimed to be on one side, having deserted the other side. To the Christian He is working out his purpose through everyone, and the Christian's task is to discover His will and co-operate in the whole plan of salvation. At any rate, his mission is not to condemn and destroy, but to love, teach and show the way to a higher life and to God. Governments do not, of course, function on this basis but the Christian citizen can exercise his little influence whenever he can.

CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion

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